

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Sunfield School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all children and young people fulfil their potential.

Date updated:	October 2017
Lead person(s):	Head of Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Head of Care and Therapies
Review Date:	September 2019

Legal Status:

Complies with Part 3, paragraph 10 of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Principals, staff and governing bodies: DfE Guidance (October 2014): and the relevant aspects of Safe to Learn, embedding anti-bullying work in schools. Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools: DfE Guidance (March 2014). Cyberbullying: advice for Principals and school staff: (November 2014). Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying: (November 2014) along with having regard for the guidance set out in the DfE (Don't Suffer in Silence booklet).

Has regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Children's Homes Regulations (England) 2015.

Applies to:

The whole school inclusive of activities outside of the normal school hours;

All staff (care, teaching and support staff), the proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

Related documents:

The School Rules, What to do if you are Worried

The Positive Behaviour Support Policy (including Sanctions, Rewards, and Exclusions) Equality And Diversity including Equal Opportunities and Racial Harassment Safeguarding Policy And Procedures including Child Protection E-Safety Policy including ICT Acceptable Use

Personal, Social, Health, Economic education (PSHE) and Citizenship.

Availability:

This policy is made available to parents, carers, staff and young people from the school office and website

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Senior Leadership team, and will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier.

If significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require

Sunfield School educates and cares for children and young people from 7 to 19 years old, who are experiencing difficulties as a result of a diagnosis of severe autism, and other associated difficulties falling within the autistic spectrum, for example epilepsy, ADHD, PDD, and dyspraxia. Our children and Young People range from low to average ability, but all demonstrate difficulties in a range of key areas of development affecting everyday life. These difficulties may embrace social understanding and communication, flexibility, coordination and sequencing, attention and concentration, repetitive and obsessive behaviours. Most also experience global or specific learning difficulties of a severe to moderate nature. Challenging and controlling behaviour is also a common feature.

We believe that we 'actively enable each and every one of our children and young people in our care to achieve their personal best; however it is defined by them and not for them.'

We believe that children and young people with autism should have access to a calm, consistent, eclectic approach to meet their very individual needs and address their diagnosis. In order to achieve their full potential, we must have high expectations and an open, honest partnership with parents and all attached professionals. Communication is the key to all of our work and all staff are asked to respect each child 's individual communication style.

The ultimate goal for us all is to support our children and young people, through specialist approaches, appropriate environments and staff expertise, to prepare them to meet the demands of everyday life as they move forward from the school into adult provisions. We want them to live as independently as possible, making decisions about their lives and having a degree of autonomy commensurate with their abilities.

Create a Culture

At Sunfield we seek to create a culture in which bullying of any kind, either against children or young people or adults is not accepted by any member of the community. Bullying of any kind can threaten both the mental health and educational progress of our children and young people.

We make it clear to children and young people, staff and parents that bullying is completely unacceptable. We strongly believe, as part of our behaviour policy, that our children and young people have the right to live in a safe, supportive and secure environment, free from physical threats, verbal taunts and any form of harassment. Incidents of bullying threaten this and cause enormous stress to victims. We are therefore strongly committed to the avoidance of bullying in all its forms.

We provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying ensuring that bullies are dealt with swiftly and firmly. All adult members of our community should be vigilant in recognising that bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Our aim is to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the community and to develop a culture in which individuals are listened to and their concerns taken seriously. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified.

Prevention

Sunfield uses the following methods for helping young people to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- the school rules through circle time key worker sessions, (PSHE) education and citizenship activities
- social stories and drawings about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly;
- making up role-plays
- providing emotional support to give each child the opportunity to express how they feel.

Methods:

- We watch for early signs of distress in children.
- We listen, believe act and give reassurance when a child(ren) communicates that they are being bullied.
- We intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children.
- We help and explain to the child doing the bullying why his or her behaviour is unacceptable

We believe that the principle means of prevention is through the maintenance of conditions where bullying is less likely to flourish and is more easily detected. All children and young people are known to us personally and it is therefore easier for us to detect signs of possible distress.

Moreover, we feel that it is important that children and young people have free and informal access to the Principal and other staff. This can be seen in the procedures we adopt.

However, a formal anti-bullying policy is of utmost importance. We aim to promote a transparency in human relationships so that children, by default, are held to account for the feelings they may evoke in others. This policy applies to all The Forum School activities both on and away from the Sunfield campus. In the event of bullying taking place among the staff, the Principal / Head of Care and Therapies or any member of the Senior Leadership Team should be informed and appropriate decisions made with possible reference to the relevant disciplinary policies and procedures.

Accusations of bullying of a child or young person by members of staff will be investigated thoroughly. Each student is treated fairly and with respect. Members of staff to whom disclosures are made should initiate the following procedures themselves and/or consult with the relevant staff as appropriate. All disclosures, whether from a child or young person, a parent, a member of staff or a volunteer should be taken seriously and treated with sensitivity. The victim(s) should be made aware that their safety is considered to be of paramount importance.

All adult members of our community should be vigilant to recognise where bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified.

Definition

Bullying can be defined as using deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

The three main types of bullying are:

1. Physical bullying
2. Verbal bullying (including cyber bullying)
3. Emotional bullying

It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion and belief, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. A feature of bullying in schools is that its existence is not always immediately known or suspected by those in authority. Sunfield recognises the seriousness of both physical and emotional bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal act in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence; for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. If our staff consider that an offence may have been committed, we will seek assistance from the police.

As part of our Positive Behaviour Support Policy we believe that all children and adults have the right to live in a supportive, caring environment in which young people feel safe and free from bullying and harassment that may include cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), and the use of discriminatory language.

All incidents of bullying should be dealt with by the carer or class teacher in the first instance, followed by the procedure in the Anti Bullying Policy. All members of staff should be fully aware of and observe the provisions of the Anti Bullying policy

Bullying can be:

Emotional (indirect bullying) including isolation of others by a refusal to co-operate with them and exclusion - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), deliberately excluding from social groups or an activity by refusal to sit next to/ talk to/ work/ co-operate with others and refusal to follow staff instructions to do the above, or malicious rumours, e-mails or text messages, and also exclusion from play/discussions etc. with those whom they believe to be their friends.

Physical harm or its threat including the abuse of personal property – jostling, serious fighting, pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings, punching or any use of violence; deliberately destroying or damaging work or possessions or removing personal property, use of weapons/threatening use of weapon (or any object which could be used as a weapon), intimidation through physical gestures and actions.

Cyber – not occurring face to face but rather through electronic means including, but not limited to, social networking sites, internet and intranet sites, email, instant messaging, by mobile phone including through text messages and phone calls, photographs both real and manipulated and so on.

Racist - Bullying directed at individuals of a certain race, culture, ethnicity, language, faith, community, national origin or national status. The distinctive feature of racist bullying is that the victim is attacked not as an individual but as the representative of a family, community or group. This is an area where schools are required to keep statistics about incidents.

Cultural – focusing on and/or playing off perceived cultural differences or similar.

Sexist – covers a wide range of behaviour from name calling to physical sexual assault. It is the use of sexual language or negative stereotyping on the basis of gender.

Sexual - is unwanted or inappropriate physical contact or sexual innuendo.

Homophobic - This is bullying which is directed towards people who are openly gay, bisexual, are perceived as gay, or show characteristics. Heterosexual young people subject to homophobic bullying are less reluctant to report it as this may enforce the stereotypical way that they are already viewed by others so sensitivity and positive support is required for victims.

Religious – Attacking faith, belief, religious practice or custom.

Special Educational Needs and Disability – remarking upon, drawing attention to, or discriminating against persons with physical disabilities or learning difficulties or other identified special educational needs such as emotional and behavioural disabilities (EBD) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) - (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia).

Verbal - Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making snide comments, teasing, humiliating others, threatening others, inciting others to humiliate and threaten others.

Written – Spreading rumours, writing or printing unkind or malicious on paper.

Bullying can take place between peer on peer ,staff and staff and staff and children and young people.

A common code of behaviour is expected from everyone at Sunfield (see Positive Behaviour Support Policy). All staff and volunteers are expected to treat each other with a professional level of respect.

We believe that all children and staff should be able to work and play without any fear of being bullied by any other person. Bullying is not tolerated and all accusations are to be taken seriously and dealt with.

The Importance of responding to Bullying

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour that may be considered to be abusive and fall within Sunfield's safeguarding policy and procedure. Bullying is an abuse of power over others and can include the same symptoms as emotional and physical abuse.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and bullying is contra to the Trust commitment to equality and diversity. Young people who bully need to be supported to learn different ways of behaving.

The Trust has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Recognising Bullying

A child or young person may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Members of staff should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if:

- is frightened of walking to or from the provision
- doesn't want to go on the transport to School
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to Sunfield or develops phobias of the provision
- begins to truant or abscond
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has other monies continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (lunch has been missed on purpose)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children, or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and investigated.

Strategies

We will work to prevent and eliminate any form of bullying by:

- Promoting good behaviour and positive relationships based on mutual respect. making children and young people fully aware of Sunfield's policy through, for example, a list of expectations
- ensuring children and young people understand that if they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying, they should tell a member of staff, their parents or any helpful adult or friend;
- promoting anti-bullying using educational elements such as our scheme for Personal, Social, Health, Economic education (PSHE) education assemblies, circle time, projects, drama, stories, literature, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice based language;
- informing parents by various means of the school's anti-bullying policy whilst encouraging them to support it;
- providing counselling and help for victims of bullies and for bullies themselves ;
- imposing reasonable, proportionate and consistent sanctions as and when necessary;
- developing initiatives to raise awareness of the negative impact of bullying by any member of our community such as an anti-bullying assembly and peer mentoring;
- Familiarising all staff with the anti-bullying policy through In-Service training and Professional Development to ensure it is applied consistently and fairly and by showing respect for all members of the school community, they act as good role models for students.

Sunfield's Anti-bullying Policy is dovetailed with the Positive Behaviour Support Policy (with support for the victim and the bully) and makes it clear what the sanctions are for bullying. We implement disciplinary sanctions that reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect. If necessary, strong sanctions, such as exclusion, would be used in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

The Role of the Staff

The ethos and working philosophy of Sunfield means that all staff actively support children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Kind and polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Children are actively involved in the prevention of bullying. School rules are apparent in all classes and support our commitment to anti-bullying practice.

All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place. All staff need to be aware of any obvious or subtle hurtful conduct in lessons.

Procedure

It is important that all staff be alert to early signs of distress in students. If a member of staff witnesses a bullying incident, in any form, or is approached by a child or young person about bullying, they should investigate the incident without delay according to the agreed procedures that are as follows:

- Staff will investigate the incident and see the child young person(s) involved.
- Parents will always be informed if their child has been found to be either a victim or a perpetrator of a bullying incident.
- Bullying which is of a serious nature, or recurrent or persistent the Principal should be informed as a matter of urgency who if appropriate will refer to a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Sunfield will continue to monitor the wellbeing of the victim and the behaviour of the bully. Meet with the victim on the review date to determine whether the bully/ies have stopped their behaviour. If the bullying has stopped comment favourably to the bully, inform staff that the

problem has stopped. Inform the Principal if the bullying has continued. The Principal will then take appropriate action.

- It should always be acknowledged that on rare occasions some children or young people set themselves up as victims, and the reasons for this should be thoroughly investigated and appropriate support given

In the course of this procedure enquiries should be made to ascertain whether or not the alleged bully has been involved in similar incidents involving this or others, thus enabling patterns of behaviour to be established.

All young people will be encouraged to report bullying to staff and know that:

- Incidents will be recorded by staff
- In serious cases parents or carers will be informed and invited to a meeting to discuss the problem with the consent of the student if they have the capacity to give it or a decision may be taken in the young people best interests under the mental capacity act to share and discuss this information if they lack capacity to consent
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted (This may also be necessary even if the individual withholds consent because of the risks posed to others.)
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated and every effort will be made to stop the bullying and this may warrant the instigating of safeguarding procedures

Outcomes

As a consequence of staff interventions:

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to apologise sincerely. Other specific follow up actions may be required
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- If possible, and where appropriate, the young people will be encouraged and supported to reconcile
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, continual monitoring will be put into place to help prevent any repetition

Staff should:

- Be continually aware, watchful and available promoting good behaviour and encourage the care of others;
- Ensure children and young people are appropriately supervised report all cases of bullying to the Principal.

Staff Training

We raise awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the anti-bullying policy are understood, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available. Where appropriate we can invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of the children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students

Cyber-bullying Preventative Measures

In accordance with legislative requirements we have a whole school approach to e-safety. This includes annual update training for staff regarding e-safety. The school also organises annually an awareness session for parents with regards to e-safety. We expect all children and young people to adhere to the safe use of the internet as detailed in our ICT-Based Forms of Abuse (including Cyber-Bullying) Policy. Also please see our E-safety Policy.

The Procedures for children and young people

Children and Young people are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know. Children and Young People are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying, in keyworker sessions, Sunfield's student council and student meetings.

Involvement of Parents/Carers/Guardians

We have clear policies communicated to parents, young people and staff to create a helpful environment

of integrity and respect. This will be achieved through regular family forum meetings and staff members communicating with parents regularly and setting a good example for the children and young people. Through the involvement of parents the school aims to show children and young people the part they can play in preventing and dealing with bullying.

Parents have a responsibility to:

- Support Sunfield's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the community.
- Contact their child's home manager, keyworker, class teacher immediately if they are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying.
- Contact the Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team if they are not satisfied that their concerns have not been dealt with appropriately. Parents will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- Allow Sunfield to resolve the problem with the bully/ies and their parents.
- Encourage their child to behave responsibly and punctually on entering and leaving the school site. The school strongly urges parents not to incite their child to defend themselves through the use of inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Be aware that bullies have often been victims themselves.

Appreciating the Seriousness of Bullying

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Bullying children need to learn different ways of behaving. Sunfield has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. Children who bully must face sanctions, which are outlined in our Positive Behaviour Support Policy. The sanctions might include apologising to the victim or, in extreme circumstances, exclusion.

It is our job to ensure that our school is a place where everyone is welcomed, valued and where specific instances of bullying are identified, challenged and dealt with effectively. To do this we must know our children and young people deeply and understand the way that their autism affects their daily lives.

Bullying will not be tolerated